



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC644

Marine Mammals; File No. 18016

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Tamara McGuire, LGL Alaska Research Associates, Inc., 2000 W International Airport Rd, Suite C1, Anchorage, AK 99502, has applied for an amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 18016.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before *[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**]*.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting “Records Open for Public Comment” from the “Features” box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 18016 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted

by facsimile to (301)713-0376, or by email to *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Hapeman or Sara Young, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment to Permit No. 18016 is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226).

Permit No. 18016, issued on May 29, 2014 (79 FR 41991), authorizes the permit holder to conduct vessel surveys in Cook Inlet, Alaska for photo-identification and observations of Cook Inlet beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*). The purpose of the research is to identify individual whales and to provide information about movement patterns, habitat use, survivorship, reproduction, and population size. The permit holder is requesting the permit be amended to increase the number of whales that may be approached during surveys from 72 to 340 whales annually. Animals may be taken up to 10 times per year during surveys. The amendment is needed to increase the effectiveness

of photo-identification studies and to decrease the total time spent operating the survey boat around whales. No other details of the permit would change.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: November 16, 2016.

Julia Harrison,
Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,
Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2016-28022 Filed: 11/21/2016 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/22/2016]